

BEE GEES...



**prove a ballad
can be moving!
without being sick!**
says NICK LOGAN

With the charts taking on more and more the appearance of a sticky honey-pot of sick sentimentality, the word 'ballad' in recent months has come dangerously close to being just an alternative for schmaltz and corn. For their contribution towards keeping the term on the right side of public decency we must thank a group who just over a year ago were complete unknowns to this country, namely the BEE GEES.

The BEE GEES (l to r) BARRY, ROBIN and MAURICE GIBB, VINCE MELOUNEY, and COLIN PETERSEN receive flowers and the Golden Lion on Radio Luxembourg for their hit "Massachusetts".



A PART from their other outstanding achievements, what the Bee Gees have done is to show that ballad is not synonymous with schmaltz; that a ballad can be beautiful without being corny; that it can be moving without being sick.

"New York Mining Disaster", "Massachusetts", "World" and "Words" provide evidence. Look to their albums "Bee Gees First" and "Horizontal" for further proof.

But, as I said, this is only part of the achievements within a year of these five young men who have carried the group light brightly through a period when most of the success has gone to solo singers and few new name groups have emerged to challenge the dominance of the established giants.

The Bee Gees—vocalist-guitarist brothers Barry, Maurice and Robin Gibb, formerly of Manchester, and Aussies Vince Melouney (lead guitar) and Colin Petersen (drums)—came to Britain from Australia at the beginning of 1967. The then Home Secretary Roy Jenkins promptly ordered two of them, Vince and Colin, to go back.

Fan protests and valuable publicity followed and finally the Home Office relented, won over by the conviction of their manager Robert Stigwood that the group had a great

future as earners of foreign currency.

As important as the publicity was the group's first hit, "New York Mining Disaster", which despite being influenced by the Beatles to some degree was one of the most lyrically and melodically beautiful records of the year.

It wasn't the massive hit it deserved to be but nevertheless it set the Bee Gees up in business and gave the British public its first glimpse of the great new songwriting talent that was to go on to have such impact on the pop world.

The group, as much as their admirers, were baffled by the failure of their follow-up, "To Love Somebody", but this proved only a minor setback and the next single "Massachusetts", all about a place they'd never seen, not only gave them what they had always dreamed of, a British No. 1, but went on to make their names for them in countries all over the world.

Since then their success has been phenomenal. Gold discs, sell out concerts in major venues throughout Europe and America,

their British tour, their placings in the 1967 NME Poll (top in the Best New Group section, fourth in the British Vocal Group section and fifth in the World Vocal Group section), plus the added compliment of many top stars recording their compositions.

What is it about them that makes them such a draw? They are young and good looking, with visual appeal to the young Monkee-type fan, but the attraction doesn't stop there because their records draw fans from all age groups.

Add to that the fact that they have two equally good vocalists in Barry and Robin; that all five are personalities in their own right and that they have made good advantage of the glamour that has been built up around them.

But above all, to my mind anyway, their strength lies in the composing talents of the three Gibb brothers. Good new pop composers are hard to find—and a composing talent like that of the Gibbs could turn into a goldmine!



The BEE GEES play to a full 6,500 Stadhalle in Bremen earlier this year, the first time the stadium was filled for a pop concert.